

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. The method comprising:

- a) providing a component for backing up and restoring a single or plurality of directory service objects;
- b) providing a component for delegating security privileges to permit access to directory service objects;
- c) providing a component for retrieving data in policy storage format and representing said data in human-readable form;
- d) providing a component having a graphical user interface including a display capable of searching and reporting policy storage data in human readable form;
- e) providing a component capable of replicating a single or plurality of directory service objects across the domain tree boundaries of said directory service; and
- f) providing a component for analyzing the effect a particular setting will have on a particular target represented as a directory service object before the setting is added to said directory service.

2. A system comprising:

- a) a component for backing up and restoring a single or plurality of directory

18 service objects;

19 b) a component for delegating security privileges to permit access to directory
20 service objects;

21 c) a component for retrieving data in policy storage format and representing
22 said data in human-readable form;

23 d) a component having a graphical user interface including a display capable of
24 searching and reporting policy storage data in human readable form;

25 e) a component capable of replicating a single or plurality of directory service
26 objects across the domain tree boundaries of said directory service; and

27 f) a component for analyzing the effect a particular setting will have on a
28 particular target represented as a directory service object before the setting is added
29 to said directory service.

30 3. The method of claim 1 wherein directory service objects include users.

31 4. The method of claim 1 wherein directory service objects include computers.

32 5. The method of claim 1 wherein directory service objects include printers.

33 6. The method of claim 1 wherein directory service objects include a directory
34 service component with a descriptive parameter.

35 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the back up component facilitates the storage
36 of object settings, links to directory service objects, and security information
37 regarding directory service objects.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the restore component is capable of restoring
2 archived data to a single or plurality of domains.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein various levels of security privileges can be
2 delegated.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein the levels of security privileges that can be
2 delegated include the ability to configure the entire policy object or the ability
3 to configure only one or a plurality of administrative templates contained in
4 the policy.

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the policy data is stored in a database.

1 12. The method of claim 11 wherein the database where policy data is stored is the
2 registry.

1 13. The method of claim 1 wherein the directory service objects include back up
2 components.